



an increased standardization of cataloging practices, a substantial problem remained. The Library of Congress, in spite of the large scope of its canons of acquisitions, was not acquiring and cataloging on an average from forty to fifty percent of the books currently being acquired by each of the other large university and research libraries.

There followed many years of attempting to broaden the pool of cataloging copy available from the Library of Congress through a cooperative program in which copy requested but not available was supplied by one of a number of cooperating libraries. There were experiments with the operation of a supplementary centralized cataloging agency under the auspices of the American Library Association, and there were proposals for turning the whole matter over to some commercial concern. That none of these developments or plans succeeded in meeting the full demand testifies to the formidable nature of the problem, for it occupied the attention of some of the ablest members of the profession.

Perhaps the first event to have a direct connection with the present development was the publication in 1948 of an informal and personal set of proposals by Ralph E. Ellsworth, then Director of Libraries at the State University of Iowa, following a one month stay at the Library of Congress as Visiting Chief of the Union Catalog Division.<sup>1</sup> Ellsworth stated boldly and flatly, "I have come to the conclusion that L.C. can and should inaugurate a program of Centralized Cataloging that will accomplish most of the objectives of a complete program of Centralized Cataloging as defined in this report, and that it can do so without undue hardship to its internal affairs and its financial resources";<sup>2</sup> he then went on to detail his proposals.

Nothing happened immediately, but discussion continued, and at the Forty-eighth Meeting of the Association of Research Libraries on January 28, 1957, Louis Kaplan presented a proposal signed by himself and Ellsworth calling for a thorough study of cooperative cataloging by a new ARL committee.<sup>3</sup> Jens Nyholm objected to limiting the inquiry to *cooperative* cataloging and submitted a document advocating a study of *centralized* cataloging as well, with particular reference to current foreign imprints received through the Farmington Plan.<sup>4</sup> The members voted that a committee should be established, to consider both cooperative and centralized cataloging, and then went on to discuss financial arrangements for the proposed study.

About the same time John M. Dawson published in the January, 1957, issue of *The Library Quarterly* "The Acquisitions and Catalog-

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ing of Research Libraries: a Study of the Possibilities for Centralized Processing," a careful examination of the procedures and experience of nine sample university libraries in using LC cards.<sup>5</sup> This important article helped keep interest in the issue alive, yet the ARL committee found itself unable to obtain the funds required for the thorough analysis of the problem which it proposed.

The urge to attack the problem once again was next felt by Richard M. Logsdon, Director of Libraries at Columbia University. As Chairman of the ARL he wrote to Ellsworth on October 23, 1963, "What are you doing on the cooperative cataloging business? I could make good use of an immediate answer. . . ."<sup>6</sup> and again on October 29, "Since writing to you a few days ago I have pretty much come to the conclusion that ARL could do nothing more important in the next year or two than to improve the situation with respect to coordinated and centralized cataloging."<sup>7</sup> Ellsworth replied characteristically on November 7, "Well, at least someone else realizes that the centralized cataloging problem has got to be solved! Hurrah!"<sup>8</sup>

Ellsworth had independently renewed his own attack on the problem in a forceful editorial written in the summer of 1963 for the fall issue of a new journal, *The Colorado Academic Library*, published by the College and University Section of the Colorado Library Association.<sup>9</sup> He suggested that the Association of Research Libraries might establish in Washington, outside the Library of Congress, a National Cataloging Center to begin by doing contract cataloging for books from countries with the less common languages, with each participating library billed for services rendered on a unit cost basis. On December 16, 1963, he sent a copy of this editorial to the director of each ARL library with a covering letter, saying:

I take it that editorials are usually written for the purpose of stimulating thought or action or both.

I will admit that my argument for establishing a National Cataloging Foundation outside the Library of Congress was advanced with malice of forethought. If L.C. can control the factors that are essential to a sensible national economy of cataloging, my argument is unnecessary. But if L.C. cannot do this, and it has not done so in the past, then my argument is valid.

The real question is whether L.C., financed and controlled as it is by Congress, can meet the present needs of large libraries.

I hope the editorial puts the question in a way that will lead to its solution.<sup>10</sup>

Logsdon in November began making plans with James E. Skipper, Executive Secretary of the ARL, collecting data and drafting a resolution to be presented to the Board of Directors. It is worth noting that since the last attack on the problem the ARL, having enlarged its membership and increased its dues, had appointed its first full-time Executive Secretary and opened an office in Washington. It is clear that having an able and imaginative executive officer in Washington with at least a modest budget is high among the reasons why solutions began to be found to what had in the past seemed insuperable obstacles.

At the Sixty-third Meeting of the ARL on January 26, 1964, the following resolution was unanimously approved by the members, upon recommendation of the Board of Directors:

Resolved that in view of:

- (1) The substantial costs of cataloging in research libraries (approximately 16% of total library operating expenditures),
- (2) The rising percentage of original cataloging that is now necessary (forty-seven libraries report an average of 46% original cataloging required in 1963),
- (3) Increasing arrearages of uncataloged materials (the same reporting libraries indicate that their arrearage has increased an average of 160% during the past ten years),

That the Association of Research Libraries should give the highest priority during the next few years to developing a program for decreasing the amount of original cataloging, working in conjunction with representatives of the Library of Congress and other library groups. Specifically, this will include a study of the Library of Congress proposal of January 7, 1964, which is a result of the thinking of its staff in response to a request from the ALA Committee on Resources, Subcommittee on the National Union Catalog;

That the Board shall report to the members at the St. Louis Meeting concerning these efforts. This resolution recognizes the significance of the issue and the complexity of the problems involved.<sup>11</sup>

The Library of Congress draft proposal, not discussed at the meeting, but referred to the new committee by the resolution, was printed as an appendix to the minutes of the meeting.<sup>12</sup> It offered two alternative plans for achieving an improvement in the amount of avail-

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able Library of Congress cataloging copy. One plan involved the provision locally by cooperating libraries of National Union Catalog copy for all post-1956 non-U.S. titles acquired by them and the distribution of this copy by the Library of Congress to other libraries requiring it. The other tentative plan involved the production and distribution centrally by the Library of Congress of standardized entries for post-1956 non-U.S. titles, borrowing from other libraries for cataloging purposes volumes not acquired by the Library of Congress.

It is obvious that the thought and discussion which went into the preparation of this memorandum under the direction of John Cronin helped prepare the way for the evolution of the plan which was to emerge and for its commendably rapid implementation by the Library of Congress. It should be noted, however, that there are significant differences: it was not intended that the Library of Congress increase its acquisitions of foreign books substantially for cataloging purposes; no mechanism was provided, other than the printed *National Union Catalog* and proof sheets, for prompt determination of availability and need; and the question of funding the operation was left unresolved: "It is quite certain that Congress would not appropriate the funds required to catalog titles not held by the Library of Congress and it would be necessary for the research libraries to supply the needed money."<sup>13</sup>

Soon after the meeting the following accepted appointment by the Chairman of the ARL to the committee called for in the resolution:

Ralph E. Ellsworth, University of Colorado  
Richard H. Logsdon, Columbia University  
Stephen A. McCarthy, Cornell University  
James E. Skipper, Executive Secretary, ARL  
William S. Dix, Princeton University, Chairman.

Somewhat later Edmon Low, Oklahoma State University, accepted appointment. At its first meeting it decided to identify itself as the ARL Shared Cataloging Committee, thus avoiding the premature decision between cooperative and centralized cataloging.

Without attempting to recapitulate the discussions and conclusions of each of the many meetings which followed or the reports made at each of the semi-annual meetings of the ARL, it can be seen in retrospect that the discussions and activities of the Committee, of the Librarian of Congress and his staff, and of others who became involved were marked by a series of identifiable decisions.

By the end of the Committee's first year of activity (January, 1965) it had been decided, on the basis of earlier studies and new samplings, that the first attack should be made on the problem of current West European monographs, perhaps through centralizing Farmington Plan receipts and monographs from this area. It had been recognized that considerably more concrete data were needed, and plans were completed for a study by James Skipper, with John Dawson as a consultant, of the characteristics of original cataloging being done in university libraries, an updating of the earlier Dawson study, to be financed by the Council on Library Resources. (Skipper's report on the findings of the study have been published in the *Minutes of the Sixty-eighth Meeting* of the ARL.<sup>14</sup>)

But it had been recognized from the beginning that the Committee's mandate had not been merely to make studies but to reduce the amount of necessary original cataloging. Therefore the Committee had not waited for analysis but had proceeded on the basis of the preliminary information to draw up a set of specifications. It had concluded that the best solution lay in centralized rather than co-operative cataloging, in the extension of present LC cataloging and copy distribution with such improvements as advancing technology might permit. The Librarian of Congress had approved the plan in principle, and John Cronin, Chief of Processing, believed that the Library of Congress could provide, within twenty-one days after the receipt of the book, catalog cards of standard quality for all monographs of reasonable research interest in certain fields—if it could receive the books and if it could add to its staff the necessary number of qualified catalogers. The Librarian of Congress had stated, however, that he could not at present initiate budget proposals to meet these conditions without legislation specifically directing the Library of Congress to extend its program accordingly.

Although it was clear from the beginning that the new technology would eventually have a major impact on centralized cataloging, the Committee decided that it would concentrate on the intellectual work of cataloging, an essential prerequisite of any automated system. If the problem of doing this work centrally, for all libraries, could be solved, distribution of the product by more advanced methods could be studied by the ARL Committee on Automation, with which the ARL Committee on Shared Cataloging worked closely.

This was the burden of the Committee's report to the ARL at the Sixty-fifth Meeting in Washington on January 24, 1965. It recognized

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that Federal funding might be impossible and that some cost-sharing arrangement among libraries might have to be studied, but it expressed its determination to seek the necessary legislation. It was the consensus of the ARL membership that this was the correct posture.

At about this time the concept of shared cataloging was overtaken by events, and for the next year the Committee and the Library of Congress were concerned primarily with legislative matters. On January 12, 1965, the President had delivered to the Congress his Educational Message, including among other matters proposals for assistance to higher education.<sup>15</sup> One of these was: "I recommend enactment of legislation for purchase of books and library materials to strengthen college teaching and research." The Higher Education Bill of 1965 was introduced in January, 1965, as H.R. 9567 and S. 673. The concept of direct grants to colleges and universities for the purchase of books and other library materials was incorporated in Title II, Part A. This form of assistance had been advocated for some time by the ACRL and the ALA and promoted effectively by Germaine Krettek of the ALA Washington Office and Edmon Low of Oklahoma State University.

It was foreseen by Julian Levi of the University of Chicago and became immediately apparent to the Shared Cataloging Committee that this legislation might offer an admirable vehicle for support of centralized cataloging at the Library of Congress. A logical argument could obviously be developed that the assistance in the form of books for college and university libraries could be made much more effective if there could be cataloging assistance as well. Admirable advance preparation was made by James Skipper, by Miss Krettek (the ALA having officially adopted the proposal), by the Library of Congress, and by Julian Levi, who had been actively involved in various Washington legislative matters of interest to universities.

On March 10 the Chairman of the Shared Cataloging Committee, William S. Dix, together with Edward G. Freehafer, James E. Skipper, and Julian Levi, presented testimony in support of the Higher Education Bill before the House Special Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Education and Labor. He concluded his formal testimony:

We respectfully suggest, therefore, that in order to make the provisions of Title II more effective in developing library collections, the Office of Education should be authorized sufficient funds for transfer to the Library of Congress or another appropriate nonprofit

library or library association, which should be authorized and directed to:

1. Acquire on the most comprehensive basis currently published library materials of scholarly value;
2. Provide catalog copy for these accessions promptly after receipt, generally within 3 to 4 weeks;
3. Process and forward to other designated libraries, by exchange or other methods, books which are not within the collecting scope of the central facility.

We estimate that first-year appropriations should not exceed \$5 million.

In our opinion, the cost involved is small when compared with the benefits to be derived. This program will go far toward solving one of the most pressing problems faced by the Nation's libraries for the past 50 years.<sup>16</sup>

The proposal was accepted warmly by Congresswoman Green and her committee, as it was by Senator Morse and his Subcommittee on Education of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare when essentially the same testimony was presented on May 19.<sup>17</sup> Substantial support continued to be manifested by many libraries, university presidents, and others, for the proposal passed through the various stages of the legislative process as Title II, Part C, becoming law on November 8, 1965.

The final text of Title II, Part C, of Public Law 89-329 is as follows:

Sec. 231. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1966, \$6,315,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1967, and \$7,700,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1968, to enable the Commissioner to transfer funds to the Librarian of Congress for the purpose of—

- (1) acquiring, so far as possible, all library materials currently published throughout the world which are of value to scholarship; and
- (2) providing catalog information for these materials promptly after receipt, and distributing bibliographic information by printing catalog cards and by other means, and enabling the Library of Congress to use for exchange and other purposes such of these materials as are not needed for its own collections.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1969, and the succeeding fiscal year, there may be appropriated, to enable the Commissioner to



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transfer funds to the Librarian of Congress for such purpose, only such sums as the Congress may hereafter authorize by law.<sup>18</sup>

The struggle for appropriations went less smoothly, for reasons apparently not connected with the library portions of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for the remainder of fiscal year 1966 only \$300,000 was provided in the Supplemental Appropriations Act, signed on May 13, 1966 (Public Law 89-426). This was, nevertheless, a notable date, for centralized cataloging became a reality, the Federal government having for the first time undertaken the responsibility of cataloging books for non-Federal libraries. For fiscal year 1967 \$3,000,000 of the authorized \$6,315,000 was appropriated.

In the meantime, Cronin and his associates at the Library of Congress had moved ahead with commendable speed in their planning in anticipation of appropriations. By early October, 1965, they had drafted a comprehensive set of policy guidelines for implementing the legislation along the lines proposed by the ARL Committee.<sup>19</sup> After further discussion between the Library of Congress and the Committee, this document became the basis of a concrete program proposed to the ARL membership on January 23, 1966, and after full discussion unanimously approved.<sup>20</sup>

Two sections of this "Program" are quoted in full, for they summarize the fundamental direction and the procedures:

### *Recommendations*

The ARL Shared Cataloging Committee and the Library of Congress recommend that:

(1) The program should have the dual purpose of building up the collections of the Library of Congress, as the national library, and thereby benefiting libraries as a whole, and of providing catalog information to meet the needs of other libraries. The two purposes are inseparable.

(2) The program should be centralized at the Library of Congress but the Library of Congress should work out arrangements, as proves feasible, for sharing the cataloging workload with the National Agricultural Library and the National Library of Medicine.

(3) Initially, catalog copy should be provided in the form of catalog cards but provision should be made for conversion at a later date to machine-readable copy when this becomes feasible.

. . . . .

*Implementation*

*A. Acquisitions—Selection—Considerations*

The present acquisition policies of the 74 ARL libraries (including the Library of Congress, the National Agricultural Library and the National Library of Medicine) are necessarily selective though comprehensive in scope. Materials in various subject fields are selected in order to meet the general as well as the special research interest requirements of their individual institutions. Considering the time element involved in the selection and ordering of different titles by each library, it is necessary to institute coordinated acquisition controls between the Library of Congress and all cooperating libraries in the new shared cataloging program if the centralized cataloging objectives are to be achieved.

Although the Library of Congress could acquire all items currently published throughout the world, it would not be able to supply promptly catalog cards for the titles acquired by other libraries to meet their service requirements if it did not know specifically what material was being currently collected by them. Priorities in a centralized cataloging operation are a necessary requirement to successful operation in meeting the current cataloging needs of cooperating libraries.

*B. Acceleration of LC Processing Operations*

1. As soon as funds are available LC will use air communication facilities for its current foreign acquisition operations. It is important to note that the prompt acquisitions of all current foreign material needed for the program is of primary importance in making the program effective for overall control purposes both at LC and cooperating libraries.

2. For purposes of the earliest possible selection of titles currently published throughout the world LC will establish close working arrangements with the authorities in each country who are responsible for publication of national bibliographies. LC will attempt to secure in advance of publication in national bibliographies all entries that are to be listed. LC will also endeavor to improve its present arrangements for acquiring domestic material.

3. LC policy for its recommending officers will be to continue to select and recommend as at present on a selective comprehensive but representative basis within the limits of LC appropriations for the purchase of books.

4. Where cooperating libraries have established broad blanket order arrangements with foreign book dealers, the Library of Congress will place similar orders with these dealers to assure complete coverage for cataloging purposes.

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5. LC will make arrangements to receive a second copy of all titles supplied by Farmington Plan Dealers.

6. LC will place orders for all series now under standing continuation order or ordered in the future by cooperating libraries. Arrangements for the purpose will be made with cooperating libraries. It is also planned to prepare a list of all series for checking and control purposes.

7. LC will accelerate and expand its purchasing arrangements in such areas as Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, etc., where the book trade is not well organized, and where there are no national bibliographies.

8. Cooperating libraries will be expected to send copies of all their orders for both current domestic and foreign acquisitions for which no catalog card is found in their depository control file of LC cards or the published *National Union Catalog*. This applies also to all items received on an automatic basis unless already provided for as a result of coordination of blanket order arrangements.

9. LC will provide a copy of each card printed for current imprints (1956—to date) to each cooperating library for their cataloging control purposes. This file will serve the following purposes:

(a) Provide full bibliographical information about the title to be ordered;

(b) Provide catalog copy which can be used for card reproduction needs of the cooperating library or for ordering LC cards by number.

These cards might be sent on a weekly basis and will be in filing order.

10. LC will request the Government Printing Office to accelerate and improve all card printing operations. To this end, the Government Printing [Office] has already established a second shift in its Library Branch Printing Office.

The Government Printing Office will also be requested to provide a faster schedule for the printing of issues of the *National Union Catalog* (monthly, quarterlies, and annuals).

11. LC will institute, as soon as funds are available, a special recruiting program for catalogers. The lack of qualified cataloging staff is the most serious problem facing LC in implementing the new program. The efficient implementation of the new program is dependent on LC's ability to recruit and train sufficient staff for the purpose. Accordingly, it can be expected that full performance cannot be realized until staffing has been accomplished. LC expects that it will take about three years to fully meet the objectives envisioned.

12. As noted in (2) above, LC will make arrangements with

foreign national libraries or other national authorities responsible for publication of national bibliographies to accelerate their acquisition and cataloging operations. It will also make arrangements to use the cataloging information in these bibliographies for its own cataloging purposes. LC and ARL recommend acceptance of the description of the publication (i.e., title transcription, imprint, collation and notes) given in the national bibliography as "standard" for the purposes of the new program. Choice and form of main entry as well as corresponding secondary entries will be adjusted according to ALA-LC Cataloging Rules for author and title entries. It is to be noted that the title description used in national bibliographies is equivalent to or fuller than the present LC standard as established in the *LC Rules for Descriptive Cataloging*. Adoption of this proposal will result in a most important step toward international cooperation in cataloging.

13. Where LC is unsuccessful in acquiring through its own acquisition channels material for which cataloging copy is known to be needed by a cooperating library, LC will borrow this material from the cooperating library and catalog it.

14. LC will arrange regional meetings with technical processing staffs of ARL and other academic libraries to explain the new program plans and to ensure coordination between LC and cooperating libraries.<sup>21</sup>

This is essentially the program which the Library of Congress, working with the cooperating libraries, began energetically to implement as soon as funds were available.

At the January 23 meeting Mr. Mumford described briefly a meeting held earlier in London with representatives of England, France, Germany, and Norway to consider international cooperative possibilities, such as the utilization of descriptive cataloging copy from foreign national bibliographies. The development of these arrangements, with consequent economies in scarce U.S. cataloging manpower; attempts to recruit the necessary staff additions; and working out the rough spots in a continuing program were the principal activities in 1966.

The utilization of copy from foreign national bibliographies may have been proposed first by John Cronin. He made careful comparisons of descriptive catalog information from a number of these national bibliographies and found the product at least as good as that produced by the Library of Congress. This evidence was presented to the Committee and then to the membership of the ARL, which agreed to accept this element as it appeared, without rearrangement.

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With this evidence of acceptability to the consumer, the Library of Congress could seek procedures for obtaining this copy promptly enough for it to be of service. This pragmatic approach began the impressive international bibliographic program which the Library of Congress has developed.

By the end of 1966 arrangements had been made with bibliographic authorities and dealers for the prompt supply of descriptive cataloging copy and the books themselves by air from England, East and West Germany, Austria, Norway, France, and Switzerland (German language books). Offices for this purpose had been opened in London, Wiesbaden, Vienna, Oslo, and Paris, and new procurement offices in Nairobi and Rio de Janeiro. Plans were nearing completion for covering publications from Sweden, Denmark, Argentina, South Africa, Australia, and Canada, and discussions were contemplated in 1967 with Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and the Netherlands. In December the Librarian of Congress and several staff members held discussions with officials in Poland and the U.S.S.R.<sup>22</sup>

As this article is being written at the beginning of 1967 it is much too early to appraise all of the effects of what has happened since the ARL resolution almost exactly three years ago. James E. Skipper briefly discussed some of the implications in a program meeting at the ALA Conference in July, 1966.<sup>23</sup> It is perhaps appropriate to leave the expression of the dream of a world bibliographic order to Sir Frank Francis, Director of the British Museum, who said in his presidential address at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the International Federation of Library Associations at The Hague on September 12, 1966:

The acceptance and the implementation of this proposal for shared cataloguing on an international scale would result in speedier bibliographical control of the materials flowing ever faster into our libraries, would reduce cataloguing costs and would release the energies of our cataloguing forces, which are at present engaged in duplicating each other's efforts a countless number of times in different libraries not only in all parts of the world, but in almost every country under the sun.

I hope that over the next three to five years it will be possible to get this collaboration fully worked out and made into a going concern. It is not only desirable that this should be done, it is necessary; otherwise the great libraries will cease to play their proper part in the intellectual life of their countries because of the sheer

impossibility of meeting all the demands which are made upon them. . . .

It will . . . mean that practicality is taking a hand in our affairs at last and that the dream of collaboration which has foundered so often in the past on the rocks of formalism can at last become a reality.<sup>24</sup>

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